DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 106 166 SO 008 184

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TITLE Social Effects of Prospective Population Changes in the United States.
PUB DATE 27 Jun 73
NOTE 26p.; Paper prepared for the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnologia of Mexico, session on Problems of Population (Mexico City, Mexico, June 27, 1973)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Demography; *Futures (of Society; Population Distribution; Population Growth; *Population Trends; *Prediction; Predictor Variables; Social Change; Social Factors; Socialization; *Social Problems; Social Sciences; Sociocultural Patterns

ABSTRACT

Unlike many population forecasts, the thesis of this paper is that present and prospective effects of population growth in the United States have been exaggerated in comparison with other aspects of population change. The effects of national population growth have been confused with those of growing affluence, changing technology, and concentration of the population in metropolitan areas. Special attention here is given to the possible social effects of the present slowing population growth in the direction of a stationary or even declining population such as the aging of the population, the problems of "depopulation" in a large part of the United States and the smaller size family. These may involve less mobility, a longer life cycle, more accepting attitudes toward death, less crime and violence, more pressure for foreign labor, and a possible (but dubious) trend toward conservatism and stability. The author concludes with a discussion of some possible effects of population changes on U.S. relations between the U.S. and Latin America. (Author)

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SOCIAL EFFECTS OF PROSPECTIVE POPULATION CHANGES IN THE UNITED STATES.

by Dudley Kirk

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SOCIAL EFFECTS OF PROSPECTIVE POPULATION CHANGES IN THE UNITED STATES*

by Dudley Kirk†

During the past few years there has been widely publicized concern in the United States about national population growth, polemically described as a population "bomb," "explosion," or "crisis." National population growth is often perceived as a major present and very threatening future contributor to a host of problems such as urban sprawl, pollution, degradation of the environment, congested highways, crowded and blighted inner cities, reckless consumption of natural resources, overloaded educational facilities, and excessive use of parks, beaches, and other recreational areas.

These are very real problems and it is demonstrably true that national population size and population growth have often been at least contributory factors. However, it is the thesis of this paper that the present and prospective effects of population growth have been exaggerated in comparison with many other factors and that, for a variety of reasons, more attention should be given to other aspects of population distribution and change. In this paper we shall give special attention to the possible social effects of a slowing population growth in the direction of a stationary or perhaps even declining population.

The Exaggerated Role Ascribed to National Population Growth

Several misconceptions contribute to the belief in the menace of national population growth.

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*Prepared for joint meeting of CONACYT and AAAS session on Problems of Population, Mexico City, June 27, 1973.

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-- First, during the last decade population forecasts have consistently overstated population growth in the United States and future population growth seems likely to be much less than earlier predicted.

To many concerned about an assumed population "crisis" in the United States it has come as a surprise that by 1972 this country had already reached the lowest birth rate in its history and one at which the present generation of parents was barely replacing itself. In recent months the birth rate has fallen further to below replacement. In fact birth rates have been falling in the United States since 1957[1] and the absolute number of births since 1961. Natural increase (excess of births over deaths) continues because of the disproportionate part of the population in the young childbearing ages but has dropped from 2.6 million in 1961 to 1.3 million in 1972 despite a larger population base, especially in the young childbearing ages. When the population has been standardized for differences in age structure the fertility rates are found to have been falling continuously and consistently for fifteen years.

Present trends have not been foreseen in official population projections, and much less by population alarmists.[2] Births in 1972 fell one-half million below the lowest of four projections published by the U.S. Census Bureau as recently as February 1972.[3] All of the polemical literature and much of the "expert" opinion had assumed a much higher rate and amount of

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[1] from 25.2 per thousand population in that year to 15.6 in 1972.

[2] Alarmists, enamored of oversimplified concepts of geometric extrapolation, have often projected current rates of population increase, ignoring the strong trends to lower fertility. To some extent so have the experts.

[3] U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-25, No. 476, Feb. 1972 and No. 499, May 1973.

population growth than that suggested by present levels. A new projection, published in December 1972 and more in line with current developments, suggests a population of about 250 million in the year 2000[4] --rather than that of 300 million commonly used--an increase of only about 20% over the present 210 million as compared with close to 50% commonly used as a benchmark.

It is possible that the birth rate may rise somewhat in the near future because (1) the number of young people in the prime childbearing ages will continue to rise for several years, peaking at 20% above the present number; (2) postponed marriages and births may be "caught up" at a later date; (3) the climate of opinion, now negative to childbearing, may change; as children become fewer they may gain a scarcity value that will result in more births.

Against these possibilities are several forces that have contributed to fertility decline and seem likely to depress fertility rates even further:

(1) The greater availability of better methods of contraception and abortion. In a national survey of married women taken in 1970, 15% stated that births occurring to them in 1965-1970 were unwanted and no less than 44% were unplanned.[5] These are of course minimum figures because women are being asked retrospectively to state that existing children were unwanted or unplanned. If it is assumed that most illegitimate births were unwanted (10% of the total) it would appear that one-fifth to one-fourth of births were unwanted and at least half were unplanned. As better methods of birth

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[4] Ibid., No. 493, Dec. 1972.

[5] Report of the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, U.S. Gov't. Printing Office, 1972, p. 97.

control (contraception and abortion) become universally available there is obvious room for still further reduction of voluntary fertility. This is occurring and surely in part explains the sharp reduction in fertility since 1970.

It may be argued that better planning will only postpone births and that the permanent effects are only those of eliminating unwanted births. This is only partially true. For a variety of reasons, postponed births have a permanent as well as a temporary effect in reducing rates of population growth (a) because a postponement may later find the prospective parents separated by divorce or death or in such circumstances that they do not wish to have another child for economic, psychological, or health reasons; and (b) because a slower tempo of births leads to lengthening of the generation, a lower rate of reproduction, a slower population growth, and a smaller population at any point in the future.

(2) The proportion of unwanted and unplanned births is especially high among minority and disadvantaged women who still have relatively high (but declining) birth rates. There are especially strong forces moving toward lower birth rates in these populations. To take the extreme cases, in the survey mentioned above, married black women of low education stated that 55% of their births in the last five years were unwanted; among white women of low education 25% were reported as unwanted. The combination of rising education and better, more available birth control should reduce the proportions.

(3) The number of births expected by younger married women has been in decline since 1960, probably reflecting a combination of their personal desires and their perception of the changing norms of numbers of children expected of women in their social environment.

(4) Other powerful social forces seem to be operating to reduce birth rates. An important one is surely the Women's Liberation Movement with strong pressures for women to adopt careers which denigrate the role of mother and housewife. Related and perhaps equally important are other trends: (a) among young people an emphasis on hedonism, self-realization and the now as opposed to future orientation and social gratification in conventional kinship structures; (b) a deep pessimism about the future induced by doomsday rhetoric and by governmental hypocrisy about such matters as the war in Southeast Asia; and (c) strong injunctions against childbearing as anti-social by popular movements such as ZPG and environmentalist groups who have popularized extreme notions of population pressure.

(5) Economic forces that limit opportunities for young adults now in the most important childbearing ages. In its simplest form it is a question of supply and demand--large cohorts competing for limited job and other opportunities for persons in these age groups. The economic future for the present generation of young adults is far less secure than for their parent generation, a slender cohort born during the depression.

One may wonder why official forecasters in and outside the Bureau of the Census were not imaginative enough to project a series at below replacement level before 1972, despite the clear and strong downward trend in fertility since 1957. One serious technical limitation was the reliance on national surveys asking women about total birth expectations. Those have proven both empirically and theoretically unreliable, the latter because the voluntary decisions to have births depend on sequential decisions dependent on future circumstances and under social pressures often unpredictable before the fact.

In more general terms, the official population forecasters, as in the early days of the baby boom, have been very reluctant to accept the force of new trends. After World War II many demographers assumed that the postwar baby boom would be quickly followed by a return to lower fertility and persistently discounted the mounting evidence that the baby boom would be prolonged, as it was for over a decade. Census projections in the 1950s were consistently too low. Having finally been convinced of higher desired family size, the forecasters have refused to accept the force of the visible trend toward lower fertility in the last 15 years. Census forecasts have been consistently too high--in fact each successive revision has in its lowest series overshot the actual population within a very few years.

The "experts"have misled the public. Having at last in 1972 introduced a series with a reproduction rate below replacement (an average of 1.8 children per woman) the range in the year 2000 is as follows:

Selected Projections of the Population of the United States, 1972-2000

(population in millions)

Average number of births per woman	Year 2000 with no immigration	Year 2000 with 400,000 annual net immigration	Year 2020 (with migration)
C (2.8)		300	392
D (2.5)		286	351
E (2.1)	251	264	298
F (1.8)	239	251	265

1972 population - 209 million

Source: Data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-25, No. 493, Dec. 1972

The present population figures are running between the E and F forecasts but it would be foolhardy to venture specific guesses as to the actual population in the year 2000. If the present downward trend is not checked or

reversed the F projection seems the more likely. Three general observations seem appropriate: (1) The present level and trends in the birth rate suggest much lower future populations than those earlier forecast.[6] (2) Even with low fertility we will have some population growth for a long time, an almost inevitable product of the age structure of the population and the fact that the average person lives a long time--on the average 70 years. We will have to wait 50 years or so until the present generation of young adults reaches old age and begins to die off in large numbers before we may expect a stationary or declining population. (3) Migration is becoming a more important component of national population growth. With the E estimates the population added by migration of 400,000 a year is 13 million by 2000, contributing some 6% to a total increase of 26% in the 30-year period 1970-2000. With the F series the increase to 2000 is 20% with migration but only 14% without.

-- A second widespread misconception is the confusion of the effects of national population growth with problems created principally by growing affluence, by changing technology, and by concentration of the population in metropolitan areas.

The relative influence of national population growth and of affluence

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[6]The level of change in projection is suggested by the following ranges of forecasts for the U.S. population in the year 2000:

	Year of publication	Range (millions)
A-D	July 1964	291-362
A-D	Dec. 1967	283-361
B-E	Aug. 1970	266-321
B-E	Feb. 1972	271-322
C-F	Dec. 1972	251-300

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-25, Nos. 286, 381, 448, 476 and 493.

and technology have been the subject of furious debate.[7] However, it is manifest that the problems have grown much faster than the population. Air pollution and highway congestion arise because people have more cars, bigger cars, and travel further and faster. In a period in which population rose 13% (1960-70) the number of automobiles rose 47%, the total travel in billions of vehicle miles by 56%, the average speed from 53 to 60 miles per hour, and motor fuel consumption by 45%. It is obvious that national population growth was an element but not the decisive element in air pollution, in highway congestion, and in the increased consumption of gasoline. Also, technology, even in the absence of greatly increased consumption, has contributed in a major way. Thus total packaging waste increased some 30% in the period 1960-66 as compared with a rise of less than 8% in the population. Or take recreational areas. Visits to national parks and recreational areas have been more than doubling each decade, far less because of population growth than because many more people now have cars and money to visit them. All of the ills that are often ascribed to population growth would have occurred without any population growth. Any examination of past trends demonstrates that reduction of population growth would have somewhat eased, but certainly not resolved, the major problems. With the lower rates of population growth now prevailing its impact most likely will be rather less than half that earlier forecast and much lower than the impact in the 1960s.

If we earlier had a national population "bomb" or "crisis" we certainly do not have it now. This in no way denigrates the efforts of those who have

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[7] Cf. Barry Commoner and Paul Ehrlich, "Review: The Closing Circle" in Environment, 14(3):23-52, April 1972.

worked so valiantly for voluntary parenthood to prevent unwanted pregnancies and births. On the contrary it is a tribute to their success.

At the national level, population control is a slow and inefficient way to meet most problems ascribed to it, which are created by affluence more than population growth. But happily the American people have themselves since 1957 been making the adjustment in population growth in the direction of a lower or no-growth population in the long run.

Most experts by this time are convinced that the distribution of our population is a more serious problem than population size or growth. The rural heartland of the country in the Mississippi-Missouri Valley is being deserted. Over one-third of the counties of the United States lost population between 1960 and 1970 and are being depopulated. The vast majority of counties in the U.S. lost population by migration. As a people we are being drawn to regions of sun and sand and water.

Above all, of course, we have been drawn into the great metropolitan areas (what my colleague, Professor Hauser, has described as the population "implosion"). By now some 70 percent of our population are concentrated in somewhat less than 2 percent of our total area. The congestion that we see in this 2 percent of the area is not typical of the country as a whole and is something new in American life.

Within the growing metropolitan areas themselves we have the other phenomenon of urban sprawl and the tentacles of the great metropolises reaching out toward each other. If we have a population explosion today it isn't in our national population; it is in the rapid spatial expansion of our metropolitan areas. Again this is because more and more of our people have the affluence to demand and to get more living space.

Historically we have not been an urban people. Perhaps the most significant single social index of the change in America is this: A century ago, in 1870, the median or average American lived on a farm. A generation later, in 1900, he still lived in a rural area, but in a village. After another generation, about 1930, the average American lived in a small town. Today he lives in a suburb of a large metropolitan area. We have become an overwhelmingly urban people and have not yet made an adjustment to this new kind of life. This is especially true of our inner city denizens, many of whom come directly from southern rural areas or from rural areas in other parts of the world.

Let us carry this one step further to the question of population mobility. We are a highly mobile people and always have been. But the effects have been intensified in many ways but most notably by our much greater physical mobility. Notably in automobiles and planes we travel further, faster, and more often. Many have mobile homes and two homes. Our life cycle in itself implies repeated change of residence.

We are becoming a rootless people, without the stability of a lasting community life. For some of us in such occupations as university teaching, the profession in a way becomes our surrogate community--community of interest for the professional man or woman, but our spouses and children must make frequent adjustments as we move from position to position. More and more we live in segregated communities--not just in terms of class and race but even more importantly in terms of age and change in the stage in the life cycle. More and more we are becoming a people without long-standing personal relationships, without the informal sanctions of shared values that keep us in line without the coercion of the law and the police.

Because others do not know our backgrounds and we don't know theirs we increasingly make judgments of other people on rather shallow and superficial appearances. All too often we no longer live in a community of friends and relatives; all too many of us live in a community o strangers.

One could argue at length about the relative merit of the stimulating qualities of life in a modern urban environment versus the quieter and less stimulating life that our grandparents had in smaller communities. But I think this fact is unassailable: our present life style puts very great strain on the individual and on the society in which we live. Many of our young people, especially our most idealistic young people, are turning to life styles in which they attempt to recreate the more human personal communities of the past. They are reaching for roots and for the deeper levels of human association that characterized more stable communities.

-- A third misperception is the failure to understand that the observed effects of population growth are attributable much more to past growth than to present levels of birth rates and natural increase.

During the next decade the economy and the society must continue to absorb as young adults the large cohorts born in the "baby boom" decade following World War II. In the two decades 1945-65, about 48 million young people reached the age of 20. Between 1965 and 1985 over 78 million are attaining this age. Young adults not only are much more numerous; they are also a larger proportion of the population. Viewed in terms of their opportunities they are in oversupply.

The society has not successfully met their aspirations; their numbers have made difficulties in absorbing them into jobs commensurate with their

education and expectations. As they reach adulthood and as they form new households they are creating more pressure for housing, recreational facilities, transportation, and other amenities, especially those in and near the metropolitan areas. They represent population pressure today, not the smaller cohorts of babies being born now and the modest rate of national population growth.

The Social Effects of an Aging and Slower-Growing Population

For purposes of analysis we might consider the effects of population change under four headings: (1) exponential population growth (the most common concern); (2) the distribution and mobility of the population (for example, concentration of population in sprawling metropolitan areas with local problems of rapid population growth); conversely, the problems of depopulation in a large part of the United States; (3) changes in age structure; (4) the trend toward a slower population growth and perhaps ultimately a stationary or declining population.

The first has been considered in countless publications, as noted above, usually with an exaggeration of both the amount and the role of present and prospective growth. The second is the subject of another session of this meeting and a number of effects of population distribution and mobility have already been discussed. I will here pay chief attention to the third and fourth, which are interrelated, the third being in some sense a function of the fourth.

A discussion of the effects of demographic changes on the society and the economy is inevitably somewhat speculative since these are inevitably and inextricably combined with other and often more powerful influences. For present purposes we are talking about direction of influence always

recognizing that other factors may turn out to be more important in what actually occurs. The following range of effects is obviously not inclusive or exhaustive--only, one hopes, suggestive.

Age structure. The most obvious problems are those related to the "population bulge" of young adults. As noted earlier, much of the concern about population changes in the U.S. has been misdirected toward getting fewer births when the most salient problems are related not to present births but to the effects of large cohorts moving into the young adult ages. These young people, born in the decade after World War II, are the cause of crowding of educational facilities and increasingly rising demands on the economy associated with their coming to adulthood--for more cars and other heavy consumer durables--and additional pressures created with household formation--demand for housing, consumer durables, recreational facilities.

The bulge in the age structure of the population will cause problems throughout its life. Today there is great demand for jobs, a competition magnified by Women's Lib and increasing participation of women in the labor force.

By the year 2000 this large cohort will inflate the proportion of middle-aged who may well impede the upward progress of the young. In the long run, of course, they will form a major problem of the aged.

It is such waves passing through the age structure that cause almost as many problems as the absolute size of the cohorts. At the young ages rapid declines in fertility (since 1957) and in absolute numbers of births (since 1961) mean, of course, a shrinking population of school age. This diminution has already reached the elementary schools and by 1980 will have reached college ages. Already maternity wards in hospitals and lower schools in some areas are being abandoned; the outlook for the

employment of young teachers is poor. This development offers at least the opportunity for greater quality of education as opposed to quantity; for better education of minorities and otherwise disadvantaged; for individualized attention now only provided the seriously handicapped. At the fertility rates of 1972 the population under age 15 will decline from 58 million (28% of the population) in 1970 to 51 million (23% of the population) in 1980. Like children born during the depression of the 1930s these young people may expect the major economic advantages of belonging to a small cohort as they reach adulthood, but their long range opportunities for advancement may be blocked by the large numbers of the immediately preceding cohorts.

The average age of the population will of course rise, from a median age of 28 in 1970 to 30 in 1980, 35 in 1990, and 36 in the year 2000, given the continuance of low fertility. The proportion of aged (i.e. 65 and over) will not rise spectacularly--from 20.1 million (9.8% of the total) in 1970 to 24.1 million (10.9%) in 1980 and 28.9 million (11.6%) in the year 2000. Such increases imply an increase in old age dependency problems, but not of major proportions until the large cohorts born in the 15 years after World War II reach retirement age in the more distant future.

Family size and composition. In previous generations most American families have become two generation, or nuclear, families consisting of just parents and children. Grandparents and collateral relatives usually live apart, and with mobility these ties have become weaker. Nevertheless, in our society, as in all societies, the family remains the primary group for socialization of children and for psychological security of its members. Fewer children, other things being equal, imply a smaller kinship group and a further weakening in the traditional role of the family. In this

situation one might expect children to benefit intellectually and perhaps emotionally from greater attention received from (and closer bonds with?) their parents. However, one of the reasons for smaller families is indeed rejection, or at least denigration, of the female role of mother and housewife. Having no children or having only one or two is becoming a deliberate choice to permit women to participate actively in a career outside the home, not primarily for economic reasons but for psychological reasons. It seems likely therefore that children on the average will not receive more nurturance but rather less nurturance from their mothers. The very fact that they are few (e.g. many single and two-child families) makes it feasible to rely much more than in the past on day-care centers and the schools to assume more responsibility for supervision and socialization of children. One may speculate on the merits of having children increasingly under the care of "professional" mothers in day-care centers and schools as opposed to natural mothers at home. Or on the merits of part-time mothers whose first interest may be professional and outside the home. But this seems to be the direction we are going with potentially profound but not too well known effects on the emotional and intellectual development of the children concerned.

From an economic point of view, smaller families historically have meant smaller households, with more per caput need and demand for space, housing, and consumer durables. This may be modified in the future as people seek substitutes for the warmth and depth of intimate and lasting personal relationships formerly found in the extended family and in rural life. Many counter-culture young people today are experimenting with different living arrangements in which more than one family may share facilities in a common household. Present demographic trends in family

size, reinforced by such factors as postponement of marriage, rising illegitimacy and divorce, and casual sexual relationships may well promote new kinds of households and in some cases provide a substitute in socialization for the older extended family.

Mobility and residence. Other things equal, an aging population should contribute to less mobility and more stability of residence. Young adults are the most mobile, and their large numbers at the present time are a major factor in residential, occupational, and social mobility. Beginning in the 1980s the proportion of young adults will decline as the present young adults move into middle age. Older persons are also less attracted to urban life and may contribute to some decentralization--in an affluent society more and more persons may be willing to sacrifice some income and upward mobility for the amenities of smaller communities.

Life cycle. An anachronism that has persisted into modern life in the United States is the crowding of basic life decisions and experience into a short segment of the normal life span. Higher education, the choice of a career, marriage, household formation and childbearing are traditionally telescoped into a few years of adolescence and young adulthood. Such decisions at an early age were once necessary when the short average life span called for early marriage, early childbearing, and early economic contributions in order for the society to survive. Today, in an affluent society, we can afford more leisurely and thoughtful decisions on such matters, just as we can afford higher education in part because the average recipient will have a longer life in which to use his education and "pay his debt" to society. There are clear trends, created by young adults themselves, in the direction of breaking the lockstep of higher education by interludes of travel, jobs, and alternative life

styles; in the direction of postponing marriage and childbearing until more experienced in sexual relations and in living with members of the opposite sex; and in the direction of delaying commitments to a life occupation or indeed to any conventional job.

Such tendencies have probably been stimulated or at least strengthened by discouragement or disenchantment with the established order attributable to the competition and unfulfilled expectations among the large cohorts of young people.

Attitudes toward death. Death is a comparatively rare event in our society and it is conspicuously ignored or "swept under the rug" in our social consciousness. Death is surely a more tabu subject than sex, though it is a universal prospect to everyone. In most other societies, at least those of higher mortality, it is accepted as a "fact of life."

In an aging population death will become more common and more salient, perhaps again more an accepted fact for which appropriate preparation is made with again accepted institutions governing behavior toward the bereaved. The greater frequency of death and greater saliency of the chronic diseases of old age may well intensify the movement to give patients and their relatives the option of choosing to "pull the plug" and permit death rather than prolong life as a human vegetable or in pointless suffering. A renewed interest in formal religion might derived from the simple demographic trend of more frequency of death that is natural in an older population.

Social disorganization. One of the major themes of the day is concern about the incidence of crime, vandalism, and violence. These have all been on the increase. One element has often been overlooked--the fact that adolescents and young adults are disproportionately responsible for such acts. As their number and proportion in the society has increased, so have

such acts, other things being equal. Of course other things are not equal, nor will they be in the future. Demographic forces have, however, been a significant factor in the increase of crime; conversely, as the number of adolescents and young adults recedes this factor will tend to reduce crime, vandalism, and violence. The order of magnitude may be suggested by the following: the number of males at ages 15-24 increased from 12.4 million in 1960 to 18.4 million in 1970, and 19.8 in 1973. One would expect a very significant increase in both the amount and rate of crime from this source, and this has been the case. Looking to the future, the number of males at this age will increase rather slowly to reach a maximum of 21.1 million in 1979 and then begin to decline in absolute numbers as well as in proportion of the population. This demographic stimulus to crime is now levelling off and will recede in the future.

Conservatism. There is a very understandable assumption that a progressively older population, dominated numerically by the middle and old aged, will be less innovative, more resistant to change, politically conservative, and, as individuals, less alert, less dexterous, and with declining abilities in intellectual and mechanical skills. They are expected to have an increasing proportion of functional, organic, and psychological disorders.

Some of these concerns are unquestionably justified. Studies, however, suggest that losses in intellectual abilities (e.g. verbal meaning and reasoning ability) are quite modest up to age 60, though word fluency decreases at an earlier age. Physical dexterity and endurance decline, but these limitations are partially counterbalanced by greater reliability and stability of older workers. Older workers show less ability in acquiring new skills but more patience and often more reliability in performing old

ones--the value of experience vs. the value of adaptability. The net effect on the quality of the labor force is moot; older workers probably are superior in tasks requiring care, craftsmanship and experience, younger ones in new occupations created by changing technology and in tasks requiring physical strength and dexterity.

In life styles older persons clearly prefer greater stability and less change. They tend to resist major environmental and social changes affecting their personal lives. They are more conservative in their tastes, whether artistic, esthetic, or in material preferences (e.g. consumption). An aging population should be more resistant to environmental changes in the name of progress, more resistant to "rebuilding" projects, more resistant to ad-induced changes in consumption, more resistant to the appeal of planned obsolescence in automobiles, clothing, and other consumer goods.

There has been much speculation concerning the economic effects of slower-growing, stationary, or declining population. This was viewed as a significant factor in the depression of the 1930s. Obviously there are varied effects. A population with relatively few children, especially in the transitional stages, will have a high proportion of persons in working ages and a small proportion in the dependent ages of childhood and old age. Given full employment this should contribute to higher per caput income; on the other hand an older labor force may be less productive and more resistant tc technological changes that would raise productivity. Perhaps most important is the relation to the dynamics of the economy--a growing population provides a sure expansion of the market--a stationary or declining population does so only in terms increasing consumption per caput. The first provides entrepreneurs with a security blanket; the effects of managerial errors may be minimized by the growing demand of

a larger population. Hence investment is encouraged. Investments may be more hazardous without such a guaranteed increase in demand. This is not the place for a more sophisticated analysis, but it may serve to call attention to an important problem.

Foreign labor. Prosperous economies with aging populations, such as those of northwestern Europe, have found it profitable to import youthful labor to take the place of those not supplied by themselves because of low birth rates. Many millions of foreign workers now meet such needs in Germany, England, Belgium, France, Switzerland, and to less extent other countries. Attracted by such opportunities have been people from a widening circle--earlier from Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Eastern Europe, now increasingly from more distant countries, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, North Africa, and former colonies of England and France. The economic demand for foreign labor in the United States may be expected to increase sharply with the decrease in the number of young workers available within.

Conclusions. The problems of an aging population empirically have not proved to be catastrophic. Several countries in Europe, such as Germany, Sweden, Belgium, and Austria, are already approaching stationary populations with age structures not too dissimilar to those likely in the United States a generation hence.

In general, demographic changes may be expected to contribute to a more stable, less mobile, less innovative, and perhaps less consumption-oriented society. These seem desirable at the present time when we are faced with rapid and accelerating social change; it is questionable how much social change a society can continue to absorb and still endure. And for those concerned with "Limits to Growth" the United States population is making an adjustment that will put the brake on pollution and consumption of resources.

Obvously the above observations are speculative. Curiously enough, they have received remarkably little attention despite the obvious possibility of low fertility in the U.S. The massive report of the President's Commission on Population Growth and the American Future is almost entirely concerned with the dangers of rapid growth implied in the "3-child" family though it was published in 1972, a year in which the American population had already reached the replacement level (i.e. if continued the "2-child" family) with the prospect that even this might be higher than the actual level of fertility in the near future. In a massive volume on "Demographic and Social Aspects of Population Growth" only two of 25 articles are specifically relevant: one, concerned with actual experience of countries with fertility at the replacement level and a second, with possible social consequences of a zero population growth in the United States.

Some Possible Effects of Population Changes in the U.S. on Relations between that Country and Latin America

The economic relations of Latin America have been characterized by development of natural resources in Latin America by United States and multi-national companies, often viewed as exploiters of cheap labor and of economically weak peoples and governments to the advantage of these companies and the consumer in the United States, with his ever-growing demand for new sources of fuels and strategic minerals. This exploitation clashes with the present and prospective needs of Latin American countries which have both very rapidly expanding populations and a desperate need to improve their economic wellbeing. Unfortunately U.S. foreign aid has not been very effective in Latin America partly because some of it was ill-advised, partly because some of it was warped by unfortunate efforts to combine it with the furtherance of specific North American interests, and finally because of an exaggerated feeling in Latin America that its

purposes were primarily the latter.

Demographic trends in the U.S. will not be decisive in what happens but will be a factor tending to diminish American demand for Latin American raw materials that would otherwise occur. This will be true for two reasons: (1) because it seems likely that there will be some 50 million fewer people in the United States in the year 2000 than earlier forecast and (2) because an older population seems less likely to favor innovation involving large investments of physical capital and reckless use of primary products. This may be a mixed blessing to Latin American economies in the sense that it means less demand (and foreign exchange) for their raw material exports than otherwise would be the case. Fortunately for some Latin American countries we seem to be entering an era in which the terms of trade may be improving for raw materials.

An interesting facet of this is that the United States, with a slowly growing population, a relatively inelastic demand for food, a highly efficient agriculture, plentiful agricultural land, and with some 60 million acres being kept out of production by farm subsidies, is in an excellent position to expand production and exports as the world demand for food rises. These exports will most likely be drawn to Asia, where basic food deficits are greatest, and to Europe and Japan, which have the greater purchasing power, for example, to buy animal feed in America to meet rising demand for meat. Latin America may not be very directly affected by this development except in one particular--perhaps a rising demand for labor in North American agriculture very likely exceeding that existing today and offering some relief for underemployment in nearby Latin American countries.

Problems of underemployment are almost guaranteed in much of Latin America by present very high rates of population growth. There are

indications that Latin American birth rates are declining in many areas and that these are beginning to reduce rates of population growth in several countries. There is also evidence that once solidly begun decline in birth rates and population growth rates may proceed more rapidly than they did historically in Europe. Latin America does not so much have a non-European pattern of demographic transition as a more rapid one with the same sequences occurring at a more rapid tempo.

Nevertheless, it is quite clear that the disparity in rapid population growth in Latin America, which is economically least able to afford it, and slow population growth in Northern America, which could absorb it with less strain, will continue for at least two generations and far into the 21st century. Under almost any fertility assumptions, the population of tropical Latin America will experience enormous population growth.

The forces of modernization are working in the same direction in both Latin America and in the United States--toward urbanization; toward expansion of the non-agricultural, non-traditional sector of the economy; toward higher income and consumption; toward higher levels of education, communication, and health; toward geographical and social mobility; toward lower mortality and lower natality. These are universal solvents in all societies today, overriding religious, ideological, and cultural differences. It is not a question of whether modernization is just or unjust, good or bad, equalizing or exploitative, capitalist or communist--it is inevitable.

The different stages of modernization at which Latin America and the United States find themselves lead to very different population problems. In a way those of Latin America are more serious but at the same time the path to resolve them is clear in historical precedent. Latin America can hopefully learn something from the mistakes of the early

comers to modernization and of course has the advantage of being able to borrow and adapt new technology and indeed rationally choose whether or not to use it at all. The United States, by contrast, faces new problems that have not yet been satisfactorily met by man--how to modify an ethic of growth and technical progress to achieve a much more stable society. Present demographic trends should help in putting the needs of people ahead of those of technology.